

DOS CORRIENTES JOURNAL

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In this issue:

- Introduction
- Agriculture
- Skill-Based Education
- Industry
- Donation

Welcome to the Dos Corrientes Journal

Nelson Mandela once said that, "Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life."

In the journey to create a model that can be used anywhere to alleviate poverty and develop communities, it may be easy for those in comfortable circumstances to nod their heads in agreement with Mandela's statement. Yet,

nodding does not bring about action. Over 100 years ago in her efforts to raise money in a vaudeville act, it is reported that Helen Keller who was thanking others for all the help they gave said "My teacher has told you how a word from her hand touched the darkness of my mind and I awoke to the gladness of life. I was dumb; now I speak. I owe this to the hands and hearts of others. Through their love I found my soul and God and happiness. Don't you see what it means? We live by each other and for each other. Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much".

In this issue, of the Dos Corrientes Journal, we will outline the projects that are being undertaken in the first quarter of 2022 and the progress that was made in January. "Together, we can do so much".

Welcome to issue #5.

Key Components of the Dos Corrientes Model

Food Sovereignty

- Established through the Dos Corrientes "Backyard Garden Food Production Course" and Community Gardens on the farm.

Skill-Based Education

- Built on a platform of entrepreneurship and the Dos Corrientes "Education to Income" model.

Industry

- Provide training, and employment for community growth and project sustainability.

Agriculture

Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. In the village of Liguiqui, as well as much of rural Ecuador, consumption of healthy food is becoming more and more difficult due to soil degradation, semi-arid climate conditions and global overfishing. As a result, there is noticeably slow child development and there are diseases in older people. The contention of Dos Corrientes is that foundational to good health and well-being is access to food that is nutritious and in good supply. Backyard gardens and a farm community garden provide that access.

So far this year, peppers, Swiss chard, cucumbers, spinach, tomatoes, onions and lettuce have been grown in the farm community garden. Some of it has been sold to a small store in a neighbouring village and the rest has been distributed among a variety of local people.



Nine mature fruit trees were given to Dos Corrientes. These trees were successfully transplanted in January and while they are currently going through a period of shock, new buds have started to appear. It has been predicted that lemons, oranges and starfruit will be picked in 4 to 6 months' time. There are an additional 70 fruit trees on the farm that were planted last year. It

will be another 4 years or so until they will be ready for harvest. Also, last year a maracuja (passion fruit) bush was planted. It is now producing fruit and a structure made out of bamboo is being made to support it. The structure will be about 40 feet long and in the shape of a tunnel. First watermelons are almost ready to harvest.

A second community garden is being planned in anticipation of a needed increase in production and space for teaching. Two part-time workers have been hired to start clearing the land.

Plans are underway for a second "Backyard Garden Food Production" course to commence this quarter. Financing is required for this and currently requests are being made.

Distribution of food is an important element in the process. Community members who participate in the gardens can harvest food for themselves and their families. The community garden will also be used to create income for community garden members. There has been some discussion about making a sales stand to sell food to visitors from the City of Manta who travel to the beach on weekends. In addition, residents in the nearby village of Santa Marianita, as well as residents of Manta, have expressed a desire for healthy, organic food. Consequently, the Dos Corrientes website is being upgraded to include a "Shop" tab. This tab will be available to residents within 40 miles of the farm to enable them to have fresh vegetables delivered to their door. Revenues will be divided among those who grew the food and a delivery-person job will be created.



Access to sufficient water is a significant source of concern. In January, initial discussions regarding this issue were held with engineering professors at universities in Canada and Ecuador. Among solutions being considered are:

1. Air to water condensers
2. Desalinators
3. Water piped to the farm from the city's main water source
4. Purchase our own water-hauling truck to bring water in from a source about 30 miles from the farm

Sourcing, feasibility and cost are the main issues being examined.

Skill-Based Education

In January, two groups of students from Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral (ESPOL) University presented their research findings as part of a graded examination in their Critical Design course. As the research was designed to support Dos Corrientes, we were invited to the presentations.

The first session concentrated on “Development of Natural Skills” in which the Liguiqui community can participate. The following is a translated summary

“Among other things, it was discovered that:

1. Liguiqui’s main source of income is fishing.
2. Some residents earn income from beach food stands that service weekend tourists.
3. Liguiqui has great cultural attraction due to its ancestral ruins and archeological remains.
4. Lack of investment in the community represents a wasted opportunity.
5. Most people do not know about recreational/vocational activities that they can learn and carry out.
6. Training in tourist activities as well as marketing will be required.
7. Baking and bartending skills are desired for applying to businesses. So are skills in all aspects of construction.
8. Men were more interested in construction-based activities than tourist-related activities.
9. Teaching online courses is difficult due to connection failures, low internet signal, lack of access to the internet and technology complications resulting from unfamiliarity with devices.
10. The most important component in any course was learning what would be required to generate income.
11. The findings showed that there is a desire for education to move the community forward. The people want growth to be internal and not have resources taken out of the community.
12. The villagers do not want to migrate to other towns or cities to have a different lifestyle but to stay and live in Liguiqui and progress within the community.



The second session centered around women in Liguiqui, raising self-esteem, and entrepreneurship. Among other things, it was discovered that:

1. Most of the activities of women are focused on the care of the home and children while men are engaged mainly in fishing.
2. Other activities carried out by women on weekends are focused on tourism and selling miscellaneous items.
3. Some men fish for octopus among the rocks near the village. Others leave for extended periods of time and travel a long way from home in small outboard motor boats. Women, meanwhile, spend most of their time doing household tasks.
4. Several things were noticed about residences. Most houses are only one-floor buildings and are made of brick and cement. Some are made of bamboo. Many are unpainted. Given these facts it was possible to determine that the village consisted of people in a lower economic class.



5. Women are accustomed to this lifestyle; their concern is the well-being of their children and the economic state of their household. Women said that they were tired of this routine and that if they had the opportunity to work, they would. A woman's experience in Liguiki is that first, the husband departs for as much as a month to fish. Women then are left with the difficulty of parenting without the presence of their husband. The work of taking care of the children and supervising their education falls more to the mother. However, it has the advantage of providing a quiet environment within the community. There is the stress of maintaining a budget at home and controlling every expense that is incurred. There are emotional problems because the woman doesn't have her husband to talk to about her personal situation and she does not have time for herself.



6. The Liguiki community is in an area where development is slow and many people only reach the end of grade school. Boys then dedicate themselves with their fathers to fishing. Men have economic control and are the main labor force, while most women are engaged in domestic work and childcare.

7. Women adopted the role they have because of the scarcity of work and study options. None affirmed that the lifestyle they have is the one they wanted since childhood. However, because of cultural history, they have not raised their voices.

8. Respondents said they have no interest in being part of the fishing business. Almost all prioritized access to higher education as one of the biggest issues for them. Dos Corrientes continued to facilitate tuition payments for the Liguiki nursing student in the month of January and all but finalized a course for teaching English to children."

Industry

The community of Liguiki, like all impoverished communities, requires an economic engine to facilitate practical skill-based education and to power employment. Dos Corrientes has determined that the most viable industry for the coastal region we serve is an ecovillage. By having residents from other parts of Ecuador and abroad who build their own homes, live off the grid, grow their own food and participate in the Dos Corrientes project, the ecovillage will create opportunities for practical education sessions and employment.

There is a lot of land available on the Dos Corrientes farm that can be put to this use. In January, a third meeting was held with the architect who will design and oversee the project. Discussions were held with a contractor and a company that will supply alternative energy. In addition, a consultant in sustainable businesses has offered his services to design and build the business model for the project in a sustainable way. Two meetings were held in January to discuss opportunities, problems, risks and challenges.



To generate income and to test marketing, a "guest house" is currently being constructed on the farm. It is almost finished with a completion date of March 15th. At the guest house, workers are being taught construction skills and at the same time, earning income. Once complete, the house can be rented to test market appetite. It is anticipated that this will be a good source of revenue for the Dos Corrientes project and a source of research for those wishing to live in the ecovillage for part of the year and rent to others for the balance.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donations will be directed to Dos Corrientes through the University of the Fraser Valley and a tax receipt will be issued.

DONATE